

Harvie-Brown and Buckley's 'A Vertebrate Fauna of the Moray Basin.'¹—These two attractive volumes are a credit to any publisher in the excellence of their illustrations and in their typographical execution, while the matter they contain is well worthy of the elegant setting. The first half of Volume I is taken up with a very detailed account of the boundaries, 'water-sheds', and other physical features of the region, and their influence upon 'migration lines,' with numerous full-page photogravure illustrations of beautiful stretches of natural scenery. The next sixty pages are devoted to the Mammals of the region. The Birds naturally come in for a large share of space, occupying pp. 214-306 of Vol. I and pp. 1-228 of Vol. II, or rather more than half of the entire work. There is a colored plate of the chick of Pallas's Sand Grouse (*Syrhaptes paradoxus*), from a specimen taken in the region under consideration, and various text and full-page photogravure plates, appropriately illustrate this part of the work. Then follows an account of the Reptiles (4 species), and of the Amphibians (5 species). There is also a chapter (Vol. II, pp. 235-286) on 'The Extinct Vertebrate Animals of the Moray Firth Area,' by Dr. R. H. Traquair, illustrated by a number of text figures and nine plates. The work concludes with an 'Analysis of the Mammalian and Avian Fauna, to which are added Notes received since the Lists were printed off' (pp. 288-299). There is also a large colored map of the Moray Basin, and several bird's-eye sketches of the topography of the mountainous districts.

From the 'Analysis' we learn that of the 81 species of mammals found in Great Britain, 42 have been recorded from the Moray Basin area. Of 360-370 species of birds found in Great Britain, 255 are included in the present volumes, which in the 'Analysis' are divided into the various categories of 'residents', regular summer visitants, regular winter visitants, regular autumn and spring visitants, occasional visitants, etc. Of the total of 255 species, 26 are admittedly "recorded on insufficient evidence," but they are distinguished from the others by the entries being bracketed.

The work is evidently the result of much patient research, and the careful sifting of records, many of them MS. notes from more or less well-known local observers, not before published. The subjects have the appearance of being treated exhaustively, and the nature of the presence of many species, which are known to have varied much in abundance and in extent of range within the area in question, is given historically in detail. Thus some twenty-five pages are given to the Osprey, and six to a dozen to various other species.

¹ A Vertebrate Fauna of the Moray Basin. By J. A. Harvie-Brown, F. R. S. E., F. Z. S., etc., and T. E. Buckley, B. A., F. Z. S., etc. David Douglas, Edinburgh, 1895. Two Vols., sm. 4to. Vol. I, pp. i-xiv, 1-306; Vol. II, pp. 1-309. Map and numerous photogravure and other plates, one colored.

In view of the recent introduction of the Starling into this country, the following respecting this bird, which has of late greatly extended its range in the Moray Basin, may be of interest to American readers: "General favorite though he be, it is, in our opinion, a question whether his good qualities may not be found wanting in the balance of good and evil, a result following upon the force of his numbers and degree of assertiveness" (Vol. II, p. 4).

"A Fauna of the Moray Basin" is a model work of its kind, and a most valuable contribution to Scottish natural history.—J. A. A.

The 'Birds' of the Royal Natural History.—Since our previous notice of this work,¹ Parts 21–24 (March 1–April 15) have appeared, completing the portion relating to birds, which occupies pp. 289–576 of Vol. III and the whole of Vol. IV (pp. 1–576). Of Vol. IV there is yet to appear the title page, contents and index, which will be issued with Part 25, otherwise devoted to reptiles.

Chapter XII, 'The Diurnal Birds of Prey, or Accipitrines;—Order Accipitres,' occupies pp. 174–275 of Vol. IV, the one hundred pages devoted to this group sufficing to give a quite full and satisfactory account of these birds. Chapter XIII (pp. 276–288), treats of 'The Cormorant Group,—Order Steganopodes.' Chapter XIV (pp. 289–319) gives an account of the 'Herons, Storks, and Ibises,—Order Herodiones'; Chapter XV (pp. 320–362) is devoted to the 'Flamingoes, Ducks, and Screamers,—Orders Odontoglossi, Anseres, and Palamedææ'; Chapter XVI (pp. 363–392), to 'The Pigeons and Sand-Grouse,—Order Columbææ'; Chapter XVII (pp. 393–450), to 'The Game-Birds and Rails,—Orders Gallinæ and Fulicariæ'; Chapter XVIII (pp. 451–469), to the 'Bustards, Thicknees and Cranes,—Order Alectorides'; Chapter XIX (pp. 470–518), to 'The Plovers, Sandpipers Jacanas, and Gulls,—Orders Limicolæ and Gaviæ'; Chapter XX (pp. 519–550), to 'The Tube-nosed Birds, Diving Birds, and Penguins,—Orders Tubinares, Pygopodes, and Impennes'; Chapter XXI (pp. 551–576), to 'The Tinamus, Flightless Birds, etc.—Groups Crypturi, Stereornithes, Ratitæ, Odontornithes, Saururæ,' concluding the work. Chapter XII is by Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe and Chapters XVI and XVII are by W. R. Ogilvie Grant; the authorship of the other chapters here under notice is not as yet disclosed, but is apparently by the editor, Dr. Lydekker.

The commendation bestowed upon the earlier bird parts of this great work is equally well-merited by these concluding numbers, which give in small compass a vast amount of information on the groups treated. The illustrations are excellent and abundant, although only in small part new, yet none the less appropriate and instructive. The relationships and distinctive characteristics of the higher group are briefly considered,

¹ See Auk, XIII, 1896, pp. 156–160.